

Gaston Grower Spotlight- Jan 2022



Winter Preparation

It's January, and the cold has finally set in for Gaston County. The middle of winter tends to be a slow time for most of our growers. That being said there are still beneficial things that commercial growers, and home growers can be doing to prepare for a busy spring. Soil testing is probably the most overlooked component in Spring preparation. A grower cannot manage what they do not know.

Why Soil Test

Fertilizer prices are currently very high; a soil test may indicate that there is little need to pay for certain nutrients that are not necessary this season. If you haven't tested in a while or are growing in a new area, a soil test may save you some headache later on in the season by getting things on track for a successful growing season. Many samples have been brought in after problems have occurred that could have been prevented with regular testing. Lawns and gardens have been particularly susceptible to over liming without a proper recommendation. There are environmental concerns with the over application of phosphorus and nitrogen. A soil test can help limit contributions to the pollution of water resources within our county.

How Much and How to

Here is a great video resource for [how to take a soil sample](#)

Cost

Dec 1- March 31 the cost is \$4

Apr 1-Nov 30 the cost is free

This information and much more can be found on this [extension publication for soil sampling](#).

Be Responsible

Gaston County Cooperative Extension wants growers and homeowners to be responsible with the properties they manage, a soil test is a great start. For those who do not apply fertilizers to their lawns and do not maintain a healthy stand of turf issues arise with erosion of soil. The responsible thing to do in management is to apply the correct amount of fertilizer, nothing more and nothing less. Homeowners that do not manage their own property should consider testing their soil, and delivering the result to the property manager to keep them accountable for fertilizer applied during a season. Many knowledge gaps in soil management exist within industry and amongst citizens. Gaston County Cooperative Extension is looking to help bridge that gap. We want this to be a record year for soil sampling in Gaston County. Please stop by our office to pick up boxes, or for help interpreting results.



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